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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 001918

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/15/2012
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TAGS: PREL PREL IT NATO ITNATO
SUBJECT: U/S GROSSMAN DELEGATION CONSULTS WITH ITALIAN
OFFICIALS ON PRAGUE SUMMIT

CLASSIFIED BY: ACTING DCM MARGARET DEAN FOR REASONS 1.5(B), (D)

¶11. (C) SUMMARY. THE GOI AGREES THAT THE PRAGUE SUMMIT SHOULD BE A SUBSTANTIVE MEETING THAT COVERS MORE THAN JUST NATO ENLARGEMENT. MEETING WITH U/S GROSSMAN AND HIS DELEGATION IN ROME ON APRIL 16, SENIOR ITALIAN OFFICIALS ENDORSED THE IDEA OF REDEFINING THE DEFENSE CAPABILITIES INITIATIVE TO FOCUS ON A FEW ACHIEVABLE PRIORITIES, EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE UNIFIED COMMAND PLAN'S IMPACT ON NATO, AGREED THAT PRAGUE WOULD PRESENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONSIDER HIGH READINESS FORCE HEADQUARTERS DETAILS, AND DISCUSSED NATO-RUSSIA RELATIONS.
END SUMMARY.

NEW CAPABILITIES

¶12. (C) U/S GROSSMAN'S DELEGATION REVIEWED U.S. GOALS FOR THE NATO SUMMIT IN PRAGUE WITH SENIOR MFA AND MOD OFFICIALS IN ROME ON APRIL 16. THE ITALIAN DELEGATION, HEADED BY MFA SECRETARY GENERAL BALDOCCI, INCLUDED MFA POLITICAL DIRECTOR

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ARAGONA, VICE CHOD CAMPORINI, MOD DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR GRECO, MFA MINISTER FOR SECURITY AFFAIRS PENSA, AND MFA NATO OFFICE DIRECTOR BRAUZZI. ON NEW CAPABILITIES, BALDOCCI, ARAGONA, AND GEN. CAMPORINI AGREED THAT INTRODUCING A NEW, MORE FOCUSED CAPABILITIES INITIATIVE AT PRAGUE WOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE. CAMPORINI NOTED THAT ITALY'S LIMITED DEFENSE FUNDS HAVE BEEN WISELY INVESTED IN PROGRAMS THAT ARE PAYING OFF, SUCH AS THE ADDITION OF LIFT CAPACITY WITH THE PURCHASE
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OF 24 C130JS. HE SUGGESTED THAT NATO EXAMINE THE CAPABILITIES OF A NEW COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE PROJECT THAT COULD MEET SOME ALLIED REQUIREMENTS WITHOUT EXCESSIVE COST (LESS THAN \$500 MILLION FROM DESIGN TO OPERATION).

¶13. (C) CAMPORINI EXPRESSED SOME DOUBTS ABOUT POOLING FORCES AND RESOURCES UNTIL THE POLITICAL ISSUES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED. SHARING CAPABILITIES BETWEEN NATO AND THE EU IS AN IMPORTANT PREREQUISITE TO ANY COOPERATIVE POOLING EFFORT, HE SAID. ESDP MUST COMPLEMENT NATO, AND NATO FORCES MUST BE AVAILABLE FOR ALL POSSIBLE REQUIREMENTS. U/S GROSSMAN EMPHASIZED THAT THE US WANTS ESDP TO SUCCEED BUT IS CONCERNED THAT THE EU MAY FAIL TO FULFILL THE HEADLINE GOAL BY 2003. U/S GROSSMAN URGED THE EU TO RESOLVE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY AND COMPLETE THE BERLIN PLUS PROCESS SO THAT ESDP CAN MOVE FORWARD. BEFORE THE QUESTION OF NATO'S FUTURE ROLE CAN TRULY BE ADDRESSED, THE ALLIANCE NEEDS TO BE MORE BALANCED IN TERMS OF MILITARY CAPABILITIES, U/S GROSSMAN SAID.

¶14. (C) DISCUSSION IN PRAGUE OF THE HRF HEADQUARTERS WOULD BE USEFUL, ACCORDING TO CAMPORINI. THE HRF CANDIDACY PROCESS, WHICH PITTED NATO COUNTRIES AGAINST ONE ANOTHER IN AN EXPENSIVE EXERCISE, WAS NOT CONSTRUCTIVE, HE ADDED. NOW THAT WE HAVE SIX NATO ELEMENTS, WE NEED TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH THEM. HE ENDORSED A RECENT BRITISH IDEA OF PAIRING UP HRF COMMANDS. WHILE THIS MAY RESULT IN A REDUNDANCY OF RESOURCES, CAMPORINI SAID IT COULD BE AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION. ITALY SUPPORTS A MORE RATIONAL APPROACH TO CAOC'S AND JOC'S, CAMPORINI SAID, ALTHOUGH THE GOI IS NOT IN A POSITION TO START THE DISCUSSION ON RATIONALIZING THESE COMMANDS. ONCE THE DISCUSSION IS UNDERWAY, ITALY IS WILLING TO PARTICIPATE,
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AND IS EVEN PREPARED TO MAKE SACRIFICES THAT WOULD IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ALLIANCE.

¶15. (C) BALDOCCI AND OTHER KEY DELEGATION MEMBERS EXPRESSED PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE FUTURE OF SACLANT AND SACEUR UNDER THE NEW UCP. THEY URGED THAT MAJOR NATO COMMANDERS REMAIN DOUBLE-HATTED, WITH BOTH A NATO AND A SIGNIFICANT US COMMAND. FROM THE ALLIES' POINT OF VIEW, HE SAID, THIS IS AN IMPORTANT LINK THAT SHOULD BE PRESERVED BECAUSE OF THE STRONG MESSAGE IT SENDS.

NEW MEMBERS

¶16. (C) THE ITALIANS AGREED THAT ALBANIA AND MACEDONIA ARE NOT READY FOR NATO MEMBERSHIP BUT SHOULD FEEL THE ENLARGEMENT

PROCESS IS FAIR. BALDOCCI NOTED THAT POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES MAY IMPACT ENLARGEMENT BUT REITERATED THAT A GEOSTRATEGIC BALANCE IS AN ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITE FOR ITALY. PRIME MINISTER BERLUSCONI WILL PUBLICLY EXPRESS ITALY'S SUPPORT FOR MEMBERSHIP FOR BULGARIA AND ROMANIA DURING HIS STOPS IN SOFIA

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ACTION P-00

INFO	LOG-00	CIAE-00	SRPP-00	EUR-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	L-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	TRSE-00
	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/005W

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3312
INFO NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KIEV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY RIGA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SKOPJE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TALLINN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TIRANA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY VILNIUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ZAGREB IMMEDIATE
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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AND BUCHAREST ON APRIL 17 AND 18, THEY SAID, BUT HE WILL ALSO ENCOURAGE THOSE COUNTRIES TO CONTINUE WITH NEEDED REFORMS TO REACH NATO STANDARDS. ON SLOVAKIA, U/S GROSSMAN AND DAS BRADTKE EXPLAINED THAT FUNDING NGO EFFORTS TO GET THE VOTE OUT MAY BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND LEAST INTRUSIVE WAY TO HELP SLOVAKIA PRESERVE ITS MEMBERSHIP POSSIBILITIES.

¶7. (C) ARAGONA AND BALDOCCI STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING THE INTEGRITY OF THE NATO MILITARY STRUCTURE, INCLUDING COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING. FRAGMENTATION COULD BE A SERIOUS BLOW TO THE WHOLE STRUCTURE, HE WARNED. THEY AGREED THAT ENLARGEMENT WILL PRESENT OTHER ISSUES SUCH AS THE NEED TO CREATE A MECHANISM TO SUSPEND OR EXPEL NATO MEMBERS AS THE COHERENCE OF THE ALLIANCE IS DILUTED. THIS HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT CONTROVERSIAL IN EUROPEAN DEBATES, ARAGONA SAID, BUT IS AN IDEA ITALY COULD SUPPORT.

NEW RELATIONSHIPS

¶8. (C) WHEN ASKED ABOUT RUSSIA'S POSITION ON MEMBERSHIP FOR THE BALTIKS, U/S GROSSMAN EMPHASIZED THAT ONE REASON FOR HOLDING A NATO-RUSSIA SUMMIT IN ROME IN LATE MAY IS TO HELP PRESIDENT PUTIN NEUTRALIZE OPPOSITION TO ENLARGEMENT. ITALY, ALONG WITH OTHER ALLIES, WILL NEED TO ENSURE THAT THE MAY SUMMIT IN ROME RESOLVES RUSSIA'S PUBLIC OPINION PROBLEMS SO THAT THESE WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH THE PRAGUE SUMMIT. DAS BRADTKE SUGGESTED THAT ENCOURAGING THE BALTIKS TO STATE THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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THEY WOULD LIKE TO JOIN CFE WHEN POSSIBLE MAY ALSO HELP PUTIN WITH RUSSIAN PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS ON ENLARGEMENT.

¶9. (U) THIS CABLE HAS BEEN CLEARED BY U/S GROSSMAN.
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